

Dateline DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

A Message from the Secretary

The days and weeks following September 11 have been trying times for all of us, and many have found it difficult to resume a normal lifestyle.

But, as difficult as it may be, we should try to maintain a day-to-day routine as much as possible. And one reason for that is to insure that we transition into the colder months with good health.

One positive step you can take toward enjoying a healthy winter is to receive an influenza vaccination. Although the peak flu season generally does not hit until January or February, we typically see our first case in November or December, so now is a good time to get your vaccination.

As in previous years, flu vaccinations are available to State employees through Club Maryland. The immunization schedule is: Thursday, **November 1**, O'Connor Building lobby, from 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.; Tuesday, **November 6**, 301 lobby, from 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.; and Thursday, **November 15**, O'Connor Building

lobby, from 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. The cost is \$12.

Maryland can be proud when it comes to influenza immunizations; we rank above the nation's 60 percent average in adult coverage. There is more we can do, however; rates in minority communities are historically lower than those among whites.

To help raise the participation in our minority communities, local health departments are working with community-based organizations to encourage people of color to receive influenza vaccinations. This is an important outreach effort. You, too, can help us spread the word!

There are illnesses and diseases that our public health efforts cannot prevent. However, your chance of contracting flu is reduced if you get the vaccination. Just remember, because the strains of the illness change from year to year, you need to be immunized every year. Those of you who have received the vaccine in the past know it is an easy process. For those who have not participated, I want to encourage you to step up this year and get your flu shot.

Here are some additional tips to help keep you healthy this winter:

- Wash hands frequently and completely with soap for at least 10 to 15 seconds, and thoroughly rinse in a flowing stream of water. When there is no water, use detergent-containing towelettes and alcohol-based hand wipes.
- Exercise, eat a balanced diet and get proper amounts of sleep.
- Avoid prolonged contact with someone who is ill.

More information on influenza is available on the DHMH Web site at www.edcp.org.



Dr. Benjamin is Named ASTHO President

Dr. Benjamin has been named President of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO). ASTHO is a national non-profit organization representing the state and territorial public health

Continued on page 2

Dr. Benjamin is Named ASTHO President *Continued*

agencies of the United States, the U.S. Territories, and the District of Columbia.

"Dr. Benjamin brings a wealth of clinical and public health experience to ASTHO," said George E. Hardy, Jr., M.D., M.P.H., executive director of the Washington-based organization. "His leadership will help us make significant strides in priority areas such as disaster preparedness and public health infrastructure."

In addition to these areas, Dr. Benjamin plans to focus on issues related to immunizations and chronic disease.

"The events of the past several weeks have shown us that disaster preparedness has to be a top priority," Dr. Benjamin said. "Focusing on preparedness and the public health infrastructure at the same time will give us the tools we need to react in a coordinated and efficient fashion."

Dr. Benjamin has been DHMH Secretary since May, 1999.

ASTHO is engaged in a wide range of legislative, scientific, educational, and programmatic issues and activities on behalf of public health. Policy committee areas include: Access to Care, Environmental Health, Infectious Diseases, Prevention, Public Health Information, and Infrastructure.

TSD Announces Contest to Name New Institute

The Training Services Division (TSD) is in the process of researching and developing a new Management and Leadership Development Institute (MLDI) for DHMH personnel and we need your help!

This Institute needs a snazzy and creative name and we're hoping you have some great ideas!

Put on your thinking cap and submit your naming and/or logo ideas to Angie Huffman, Management Development Specialist (ahuffman@dhmh.state.md.us or 410-767-5761) by **November 30, 2001**. The entries will be judged by a panel of DHMH staff. The winner will receive a \$100 Visa Gift Card and two runner-ups will receive \$50 Visa Gift Cards.

Contest winners will be notified by December 17, 2001 and will be announced on the TSD Web site at www.dhmh.state.md.us/tsd.

"Ford DNA" and General Electric's "Crotonville" (Crotonville is the location of GE's program) are examples of other organizations' leadership development program titles.

MLDI will bring together the various fragmented manager and supervisor training programs under one umbrella and then fill in with additional programs meeting the management and leadership development needs of DHMH

personnel in a cohesive and interrelated format.

The Institute's focus is developing *true* leaders for DHMH's future who demonstrate core leadership competencies, thus producing supervisors who are more comfortable performing their current supervisory duties while preparing them to lead in successively senior positions.

HIV Grant to Study Trends in Occurrence of Drug Resistant Strains

The DHMH AIDS Administration has received a five year, \$1.8 million award from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to examine HIV resistant infection among individuals newly infected with HIV.

Although recent drug therapies have led to longer and healthier lives for many people living with HIV and AIDS, there are some individuals who cannot benefit from these treatments because of a resistance to the drugs currently available.

"Assessing the impact of drug resistance among people infected with HIV / AIDS will help us ensure that appropriate prevention, treatment, and adherence programs are in place," said Dr. Liza Solomon, Director of the AIDS Administration. "In addition to having a better understanding of the development of HIV resistance statewide, this study will provide important information

Continued on page 4

DHMH Receives Two Disaster-related Grants

DHMH has received two federal grants totaling \$250,000 to support crisis mental health services and to supplement existing mental health and substance abuse systems in areas affected by the September 11 terrorist attacks.

The Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration is the recipient of a \$200,000 grant and the Mental Hygiene Administration has been awarded \$50,000.

The grants have been awarded by the federal Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). They are among \$6.8 million spread out among 23 grants awarded to eight states and the District of Columbia.

"Our substance abuse grant will help people deal with today's real-life issues rather than have them turn to drugs or alcohol as a retreat," said Arlene Stephenson, DHMH Deputy Secretary for Public Health Services. "The mental health grant will help us get a better handle on where gaps in crisis services are in our state."

Funds from the Substance Abuse Prevention Grant will be awarded to local health departments in five Maryland counties that have large military installations: Anne Arundel, Frederick, Harford, Prince George's and St. Mary's. The community-based project will focus on families that are at-risk or have a history of substance abuse. It will include risk reduction

and skill building for those who use alcohol, tobacco or other drugs; stress reduction; grief and loss counseling; and issues of safety within existing environments.

The Mental Health Grant will support a mental health needs assessment to enable Maryland to identify gaps in mental health service capacity that cannot be filled through existing regular and emergency funding mechanisms.

SAMHSA also awarded funds to Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Virginia.

Check Your Risk of Diabetes

By the time diabetes is diagnosed, damage to the cardiovascular system has been going on for seven to 10 years, according to the American Diabetes Association. During November, which is National Diabetes Month, find out if you're at risk of developing diabetes.

Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight and increasing your physical activity may help prevent or delay the onset of Type 2 diabetes, and help prevent heart disease and stroke.

People at high risk for Type 2 diabetes, the most common type, can sharply lower their chances of getting the disease with diet and activity, accord-

ing to the findings of a major national clinical trial, the Diabetes Prevention Program. Participants who maintained their physical activity at 30 minutes per day, usually with walking or other moderate intensity exercise, and lost five to seven percent of their body weight, reduced their risk of getting type 2 diabetes by 58 percent.

You are at higher risk of developing diabetes if:

- you are age 45 and older;
- you are African American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian, Asian American, Pacific Islander;
- you are overweight;
- you have high blood pressure;
- you have a family history of diabetes; or
- you have a history of diabetes during pregnancy or you are a woman who has had a baby weighing more than 9 pounds at birth.

More information, including a risk assessment tool, is available in the publication, ***Could You Have Diabetes and Not Know It?*** To obtain a copy, send your name and address to: goodheart@dnhm.state.md.us. For tips on healthy eating and physical activity, visit <http://mdpublichealth.org/ocd/cardio/html/prevent.html>.

Editor's Note: Thanks to the staff in the Family Health Administration's Division of Cardiovascular Health and Nutrition for writing this article.

HIV Grant

Continued

that can be put to immediate use by the clinician in developing an optimal treatment regimen for the patient."

This award will be a collaboration between the AIDS Administration, the DHMH Laboratories Administration, and HIV counseling and testing sites in Baltimore City, in Baltimore, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties, and the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services' Division of Correction.



Charlene Street, of the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, participates in the Mental Hygiene Administration's Fourth Annual Gong Show.

Our thanks to . . .

John Allen, Mental Hygiene Administration constituent services and **Tracy DuVernoy**, Community Health Administration veterinarian, who traveled to New York to lend assistance following the September 11 terrorist attacks.

Upcoming events

Tuesday, October 30 — **Lecture: The Influenza Viruses and their Vaccines.** Masur Auditorium, Clinical Center, Building 10, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda; 7:00 - 8:00 p.m. Lectures are free to the public. Sponsored by the NIH Clinical Center. Phone 301-496-2563 for more information.

Saturday, November 3 — **Christmas Bazaar**, Holly Center, 926 Snow Hill Road, Salisbury; 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. A fun-filled day of crafts, crafts and more crafts. Refreshments available. Sponsored by the Holly Foundation. Contact Lee Lewis at 410-572-6206 for more information.

Friday, November 16 — **The Second Maryland State Hepatitis Coalition Conference**, Jack B. Kussmaul Theater, Frederick Community College; 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Continuing medical education credits are available. For registration or more information, call 301-631-3343 or visit the Web site at www.mdhepatitis.org.

Tuesday, November 20 — **2001 Governor's Annual Awards and Employee Recognition Training Conference**, Baltimore Convention Center; 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Contact Lisa MacFarlane at 410-767-5753 for questions about registration.



STATE OF MARYLAND

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A publication of the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Office of Public Relations

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